



Joint Medical Director Position Statement – Air Medical Utilization

Travis County STAR Flight (STAR Flight) is an integral component of the Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical System (ATCEMS) that is available as a resource to all ATCEMS personnel including ATCEMS Communications (MedComm). When deployed early, rapidly, and appropriately, STAR Flight can provide significant patient Out-of-Hospital time savings, improve patient outcomes, reduce patient mortality and morbidity, and provide system relief, preventing strain.

Our goal is to empower our first responders, ATCEMS, and MedComm personnel to recognize the need for, and initiate dispatch of, STAR Flight early, rapidly, and appropriately. We have provided you with a combination of operational and clinical guidelines to aid in the decision process of when to consider, request, and dispatch STAR Flight.

The considerations presented below are intended to help in your thought process and are by no means a mandate. They are provided to help guide your decision-making process and to ensure that you, as a provider, feel comfortable in your authority to dispatch the aircraft as another tool to supplement your care.

Time-Critical Criteria:

The goal is to minimize total Out-of-Hospital time for patients with time-sensitive conditions, defined as significant morbidity or mortality as a result of delay in reaching definitive care.

Total Transport Time is defined as time of dispatch to arrival at hospital. It includes response time to patient, scene time, and transport to definitive care. STAR Flight should be considered for dispatch if patient has a time-sensitive condition and the **Total Transport Time** is expected to be greater than **40 minutes**. Additionally, STAR Flight should be considered for the patient with a time-sensitive condition when one or more of the following exists: Estimated EMS ground response is **>15min**, estimated scene time is **>20min**, and/or the estimated transport time to appropriate facility is **>20min**.

Time sensitive conditions including (but not limited to):

- STEMI, or suspected ACS
- ROSC
- Suspected new onset CVA less than 8 hours from onset
- Respiratory distress/arrest /hypoxia
- Trauma with anticipated need for rapid surgical intervention
- Head injury with GCS < 13 or anticoagulated
- Burns > 20% TBSA
- Suspected septic shock
- Undifferentiated hypotension



Care-Critical Criteria:

STAR Flight should be considered when it can provide resources specific to the patient's or provider's needs, including:

- DSI/RSI
- Video Laryngoscopy
- Thoracostomy
- Ultrasound
- Blood product administration
- Ventilatory support
- Pressor therapy
- Rapid Transport
- Critical Pregnant (trauma and medical)

Operational-Critical Criteria:

- Difficult/Prolonged patient accessibility
- Difficult/Prolonged patient extrication
- Multiple patients
- Need for transport to specialty facility (Trauma, Pedi, Burn, ROSC, Stroke, Interventional, ECMO)

This list is not all inclusive. We recognize that there will be times when a patient may not meet these criteria but clinical intuition or operational considerations indicate the need for STAR Flight. This is also an acceptable use.

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